



ASSOCIATION OF LATINA AND LATINO
ANTHROPOLOGISTS
WORLD ON THE MOVE

Mobilities, Migration and Displacement

Ana Aparicio

The AAA's Public Education Initiative

Over the past two years we have been aggressively planning the [new Public Education Initiative \(PEI\)](#) on Mobility, Migration, and Displacement, now titled "World on the Move." Building on the successes of the Association's first PEI, "[Race: Are We So Different](#)," the steering committee has been working to develop a framework, partnerships, build conversations with members, and secure funding. We welcome this opportunity to share recent developments with both the [ALLA](#) and greater [AAA](#) membership and invite feedback. In what follows I draw from our Vision Statement and provide an update on ongoing developments.

"World on the Move" focuses on mobilities, migration, and displacement, with an emphasis on historical events and processes occurring at the global level, everyday lived experiences occurring at the local level, and implications for the future. We aim to highlight how the movement of people across locations impacts people and resources everywhere, thus the project will span a broad history and includes exploration of voluntary and involuntary migration, as well as forced resettlement and other forms of displacement across time and geographies.

As we enter the 21st century, processes of migration and associated impacts and implications continue to stir vigorous debates in popular discourse, culture, policy development, and in the academy. Through *World on the Move* we seek to participate and make important interventions in public and scholarly discourse on these important processes. As a discipline, anthropology has examined various conditions that affect population movement, including colonialism, conquest, enslavement, war, labor demands and exploitation, annexation, shifting border policies, economic and political expansion and collapse, social networks, and climate change. In this regard, our project will incorporate knowledge from the four subfields of anthropology: archaeologists who explore migration historically and in the contemporary period; biological anthropologists who analyze the ways in which migration relates to health, physiological, and genetic change; linguistic anthropologists who study language change and use in the migration process; and cultural anthropologists who explore migration and related social, political, and economic processes.



Immigrant rights march in downtown Los Angeles, California on May Day 2006. Image courtesy Wikimedia Commons

While we have had a small steering group in place to help provide the framework for the project, we will continue to reach out to leading scholars in the field to join us as we further develop the various products and prepare material to engage a national public audience. Members of the Association have long been conducting research on issues on the topic of the new initiative and we look forward to working together to highlight their contributions in all facets of the project. We will also continue to reach out to our sister organizations (eg, the [Brazilian Anthropological Association](#)) and national institutions (eg, the [Smithsonian Institution](#)) to build on and to contribute to a broader understanding of global migrations.

Goals

Our goals with *World on the Move* are: (1) to reach a broader public via interactive multimedia, exhibits, curricula, and local conversations and; (2) draw from the expertise of our members by highlighting their work in various aspects of the project and its products.

Our Audiences

We will develop products to reach multiple audiences in order to engage with and potentially affect the discussions taking place within these various groups and to increase a more historical and critical understanding of mobilities, migration, displacement, their social determinants and societal impacts. We hope to intervene in order to move the discussions toward a more historical and culturally nuanced understanding of population movements. We have defined our audiences to include:

- Public Audiences
- Media/journalists
- US policymakers
- US educators and K-12 students
- Immigrant communities
- Advocacy or social justice organizations

Developing Products

In order to reach these multiple audiences and inform national discussions on mobilities, migration, and displacement, we envision developing a series of products, including:

- Museum exhibit(s) and contribution to the Smithsonian Institution's "[Our American Journey](#)" exhibit, projected to open in 2017
- An interactive website, social networks, and other multimedia platforms
- Participation at the Smithsonian Institution's [Folklife Festival](#)
- Conferences and symposia for scholarly exchange
- Educational materials

Ongoing Work

We are happy to report that as of February 2014, [Arvenita Washington Cherry](#) has been working with us as the Project Manager for the PEI. She is a socio-cultural and educational anthropologist with research interests in the social construction of race/ethnicity in Afro-diasporic spaces; she is adjunct faculty in the [University of Maryland](#) system and has worked with museums and numerous non-profit and philanthropic organizations.

While we have been working to structure this new initiative—developing partnerships, identifying audiences, defining products, brainstorming on experts from whom we will seek input, and seeking funding—we know that such a far-reaching and multi-dimensional project will continue to benefit from conversations with our membership. At the most recent [AAA Annual Conference in Chicago](#), we sponsored two roundtable panels: one focused on language and migration, organized by Hilary Dick for the PEI and [Society for Linguistic Anthropology](#) (SLA); and a second on contemporary Latino migration to the US, organized by PEI Co-Chair Leo Chavez. The discussions held during and as a result of such roundtables are critical as we begin to determine the content and key substantive points of the project. We invite others to also consider organizing conversations with an eye toward the PEI. Members are also invited to communicate through their sections or directly with the PEI (migration@aaanet.org) with questions, thoughts, and ideas for the project.

Ana Aparicio is associate professor of anthropology and Latino Studies at Northwestern University, president-elect of the Association of Latina and Latino Anthropologists, and co-chair of the AAA Public Education Initiative on Migration and Displacement.

Alex E Chavez (U Notre Dame) and Santiago Guerra (Colorado C) are contributing editors of ALLA's column in AN.

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